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ABSTRACT

The paper being reviewed puts the vernacular in the perspective of the linguistic repertoire of a speech community. It is suggested that the repertoire as a single system should be seen on a societal or individual level rather than on a linguistic level such that various codes are selected by members of the community according to socially determined rules of appropriateness. Labov's work suggests that for purposes of comparing different communities, whether bilingual or monolingual, the term "vernacular" should be restricted to a technical usage, applying only to the first-learned spoken languages of a group of speakers. Research on native New Yorkers' speech, comparative studies of children's speech in Philadelphia and New York, and Benji Wald's own work on the phonology of Swahili are offered to back up the critique. This approach to the vernacular avoids the problem of variability in judgment as to what is the vernacular. A second critique centers on Kachru's discussion of code-mixing. Instead of asking when there would be a new code, as Kachru does, the critique would ask when do we know we have a code in the first place. In addition to Kachru's call for a typology of constraints found across codes, the critique would add an appeal for a typology of constraints to distinguish code-mixing or switching in different multilingual communities. (AMH)

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DISCUSSION OF KACHRU'S PAPER, "ON THE ROLE OF THE VERNACULAR IN THE BILINGUAL'S LINGUISTIC REPERTOIRE," for Symposium on Vernacular/Standard relations in Bilingualism. Wingspread, Wisconsin, November, 1980.

Benji Wald

Professor Braj Kachru's paper "on the role of the vernacular in the bilingual's linguistic repertoire" contains too many ideas of interest for me to do justice to them all within the time limitations on this discussion. Therefore, I have decided to begin with a brief characterization of the intent of the paper as I see it, and then proceed to examine in more detail, the key concepts of vernacular and code as used by Kachru.

The paper attempts at the same time more and less than the title implies. The role of the vernacular is not focussed on, but rather put in the perspective of the entire linguistic repertoire of a speech community. Most of the paper surveys and seeks to categorize formal and functional aspects of community bilingualism. At the end of the discussion, K joins Ferguson: 1978 in calling for moving away from description of linguistic repertoire, toward writing grammars for multilingual communities, under the assumption that at some high level of organization, each such repertoire forms a single system. The suggestion is that the repertoire as a single system should be seen on a societal or individual level rather than on a linguistic level, such that various codes are selected by members of the community according to socially determined rules of appropriateness.

At the outset of the paper, K leaves open the question of how a bilingual repertoire differs from a monolingual one, in terms of a system that is adjusted to all necessary situations. He gives this issue passing attention and proceeds swiftly to discussion of multilingual communities. As a sociolinguist interested in writing grammars for both monolingual and multilingual communities, I am interested in knowing to what extent such grammars may be expected to differ, and how the nature of the society determines this. I also think that exploration of the differences between mono and multilingual grammars is important to practical concerns and deserves more attention. Thus, in a society like the U.S., the lower educational system has tended to view natural bilingualism, and even some varieties of of monolingualism, as problems associated with lack of knowledge of standard English at best, a cognitive and social deficiency at worst. In reaction, scholars of bilingualism have defended the phenomenon by arguing that bilingualism constitutes an "enrichment" of monolingualism in available means of expression, e.g. Haugen: 1971. One can detect a similar but much more precise argument among some educational psychologists, who have proposed that bilingualism can lead to cognitive flexibility and advantage, e.g. Lambert & Peal:1962, Tucker:1977, Duncan & De Avila:1979, Kessler & Quinn:1980.

Kachru maintains a greater distance from putting a society-independent value on bilingualism. I expect that he would agree with other sociolinguists in viewing bilingualism as, first and most importantly, a widely found social fact, necessary in its

environment in that it allows the involved communities and networks of speakers to function, and thus beyond good and evil.

He briefly refers to bilingualism as distinguishable from monolingualism in terms of code-range and code-extension (among other features), and in his conclusions, he emphasizes that non-native speakers of English have contributed heavily to extension and expansion of English. However, there is a note of caution in his continuation:

"but we still have far to go to understand the pragmatics of non-native varieties of English."

This calls to mind Gumperz's notion of cross-talk, by which different speakers may share structural rules of language, e.g. syntax, lexicon (although probably not phonology), but differ in interactional and information structuring rules for spoken discourse, leading to aggravation and misunderstanding by participants to a conversation across different backgrounds. This dysfunction is by no means confined to bilingual backgrounds. Deborah Tannen:1979 demonstrates the same problems for a conversation between monolingual Californians and New Yorkers, who have different rules for proposing, accepting and rejecting topics.

K uses certain basic concepts that are essential to other constructs he proposes, but which are in need of further precision in order to be applicable to the issue of comparing different communities, whether bilingual or monolingual. I will discuss in more detail now, the concepts of vernacular and code.

About the term vernacular, K says:

> the status of a vernacular and the use of this term varies from one bilingual context to another, and the attitudinal responses to 'what is a vernacular?' are not identical in all contexts.

In the ensuing discussion, K notes that the vernacular might include the written and/or official language in some cases, but not in others. It also seems to be implied, that if the vernacular is understood only to apply to spoken forms, depending on the society, speakers may have different attitudes toward it, e.g. good:bad or effective:ineffective, etc. I will suggest that for purposes of comparing different communities, whether bilingual or monolingual, there is good reason to restrict the term 'vernacular' to a technical usage, applying only to the first learned spoken language or languages of a group of speakers.

While it is true that, in English, the term vernacularization has been used to refer to the process of replacing an older written or official language with a form more closely approximating the spoken language of a community, it is often clear that this language is only an approximation, and it cannot be identical to the spoken language. This is most obvious where the standardizing of spoken languages for literacy purposes in conscious language planning has led to the problem of selecting among competing dialects. Languages which have been standardized for a long period of time tend to become quite distinct from the spoken languages they most closely resemble. No doubt because standard languages are shared by communities that have different

spoken varieties of a language, they tend to be conservative, less flexible in changing than spoken languages, which must be adopted to a larger variety of immediate purposes in daily life.

A definition of the vernacular proceeding from Labov's work on the English of essentially monolingual New Yorkers is, I believe, more precise and useful in maintaining comparability across communities. According to this conception, the vernacular is the first learned and most systematic variety of language used by a community of speakers. The systematicity is revealed in the predictability of norms in actual speech. Using phonological examples, Labov showed that, as New York City speakers moved from situations evoking casual speech, associated with the vernacular, phonological predictability became more complicated and difficult for some features. Thus, syllable final r became more frequent in non-vernacular speech. In the vernacular, one would be most often correct to predict the absence of syllable final r (i.e. its vocalization) virtually always right for non-middle class speakers. In moving away from the vernacular, predictability becomes more complicated and cannot be done for any next utterance, but must be done on a probabilistic basis over a series of next utterances. In addition, systematic relations between different vernacular norms are obscured in non-vernacular speech, due to sporadic correction. Thus, in the New York City vowel system, a chain shift effects both _oh_, as in _coffee_, _oy_, as in _voice_, and _ah_, as in _heart_, _hard_, _father_ and _odd_. _oh_ and _oy_ are

raised and ah moves back. In non-vernacular speech, oh tends to be corrected to a lower norm, but this correction does not affect oy which remains higher, or ah which remains back and therefore close to corrected oh.

Labov's original notion of the vernacular as being the most integral system in a speaker's repertoire seems to attend to the critical age hypothesis (cf. Lenneberg:1964). According to this hypothesis, above a certain age, somewhere near pubescence, first learned systems cannot be easily adjusted, and apparently rigidify. Whether this is due to a biological time table or drastic social change at this age, or both, is open to question.

Certainly this resistance to change is more apparent for phonology than for syntax and lexicon, where structural relations seem less tightly bound and have a much lower rate of occurence than most phonemes, especially vocalic ones.

In pursuing the issue of critical age in dialect formation, Arvilla Payne:1976,1980 reports that in the King of Prussia suburb of Philadelphia, New York City immigrants arriving after the age of five, seldom learn to make lexical distinctions in the raising of aeh, as in bad, hand, etc. which distinguish Philadelphia from New York. Philadelphia generally prohibits raising before voiced stops. There are three lexical exceptions: bad, mad, glad (but not sad). The New Yorker's systems generally has raising before all voiceless stops, and continue to have this system when moving to Philadelphia after age 5. This finding puts striking

limitations on critical age for acquisition of some linguistic features.

In my preliminary work on the phonology of Swahili spoken by first and other speakers in Mombasa, I found that non-native speakers who arrived in adolescence or later, regardless of length of residence, or apparent intensity of interaction with native speakers, failed to acquire or even recognize that native Mombasans distinguish dental and post-alveolar t as distinct phonemes, whereas bilinguals who entered the community in preadolescence both recognized and produced the distinction with ease.

To the extent that there is a general cut-off age for recognizing and accurately acquiring certain linguistic features, late arrival bilinguals cannot be expected to naturally acquire all details of the Mombasa Swahili vernacular. I suspect this will be true of all vernaculars.

Anticipating discussion of codes, whereas the quantitative control of variation in monolingual societies, uncovered in studies of various communities across the globe, may seem subtle to outsiders, and indeed may not be perceived accurately, if at all, even by native speakers, shifts of greater degrees are detectable in other communities.

Ferguson's 1958 original study of diglossia proposed rather discrete shifts between high (usually standard, overtly pretigious) and low (apparently vernacular, local) varieties of

languages. In the Anglophone Carribean, a situation intermediate between Ferguson's discrete and Labov's fine variation was proposed for what has been called the post-creole continuum (cf. Hymes:1972 DeCamp, Bickerton). In my studies of style shifting in Mombasa Swahili (Wald:1973 Wald:1979, Wald:1980), a sharp distinction is found in the use of some forms according to interlocutor. It is shown that with respective to the tense markers A and NA, both expressing general or imperfective tense/aspect reference, NA is rarely found in any style of speech used by young children or in the speech of adolescents and adults speaking to familiars, especially community members. Of the two, NA rarely reaches above 20% of the total of both markers in any coherent stretch of discourse. Thus, A is the vernacular form, first learned, and continued to be used by all community members in in-group communication. In speaking to outsiders, the proportions of NA and A are virtually reversed, a very sharp shift, so that NA becomes the predominant norm of the two (generally at any 70% or greater rate of occurence of the two). Sexual differentiation is also apparent in that many more males than females show this shift, or so sharp a shift. However, this appears to be primarilly a function of exposure to non-Swahilis. Those relatively few females who have had Western education and/or expanded contacts with outsiders, readily increase NA usage in such situations, while the relatively few males who do not have

outside contacts, and are bound to their own neighborhoods, do not show the shift.

This approach to the vernacular is not dependent on attitudes toward the vernacular, speaker's judgments on what is vernacular and what is not, which as Kachru notes, is different for different societies, and, I might add, variable within many societies.

To exemplify the problem of direct questioning in probing the vernacular, consider the following:

Swahili speakers recognize different forms of Swahili within their own communities. In all areas with first Swahili populations, the terms in-talk (lugha ya ndani) and out-talk (lugha ya nje) are in common use. These terms invariably refer to some kind of in-group and out-group talk, respectively. However, they differ considerably across speakers in what they entail.

For example, in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, a Luguru speaker, who was overtly insecure about his Luguru, told me that he uses the Swahili word pika 'cook' even when talking Luguru. When I suggested the word ambika, he said that this was an inside word, used by elders, Lugurus who really knew the language well. For such bilinguals, in-talk refers to a version of their native language in which Swahili lexical items have not replaced historically non-Swahili items. The speaker's insecurity reflects the negative attitude that many rural non-Swahilis express concerning the code-switching and lexical borrowing of the younger generation, which has accompanied urbanization and the spread of

bilingualism with Swahili in Kenya and Tanzania. As one middle-aged Digo farmer from Mwabungo put it "I can speak Digo for 24 hours without using a single Swahili word, but these kids today can't speak their language for five minutes without stealing from Swahili." ("Stealing" is the coastal term for what linguists call "borrowing".)

The inhabitants of the small fishing village of Vanga consider themselves Swahilis, but they do not consider their in-talk language to be Swahili. They call it kiVumba. KiVumba is a distinct variety of Swahili to the historical linguist, but not as distinct from other varieties of Swahili as from the Digo and Segeju spoken in the area intervening between Vanga and other Swahili communities.

In Mombasa, in-talk was defined by many speakers as "the Swahili that only Swahilis know", while out-talk was defined as "the Swahili that everybody knows", under the coastal perception that everyone on the East African coast shares a form of Swahili. However, what in-talk consists of varies from speaker to speaker. Most speakers readily mention a stereotype of ndoo (in-talk): njoo (out-talk), the imperative of 'come', to exemplify the difference. (This example refers to a much larger set of words which vary between palatal and dental pronunciations, the dental pronunciations much favored in vernacular speech). The variation between the tense-markers A and NA is mentioned extremely rarely. Speakers are not clear in their overt attitudes about whether A

and NA are differentiable in terms of in and out-talk. To this extent, their reports and notions of in-talk are distinct from their actual situated speech behavior, which reveals the marked vernacular preference for A over NA quite clearly.

Evaluative attitudes toward some features of in-talk are also subject to variation in Mombasa. Elders generally highly value what they call in-talk, and use it as a symbol of pride in their local identity. They associate the "in-est" in-talk with KiMvita, a label which refers to an idealized form of Mombasa Swahili spoken by ancestors no longer alive, but whose style is to be emulated in poetry and ceremonial speech. Younger speakers vary in what they call in-talk. KiMvita is always highly valued, but is not always associated with in-talk. For adolescents, in-talk may refer to slang, which includes loans from English, such as taimu 'time' (Swahili wakati) or skwiziana 'embrace each other' (Swahili kazana, or kumbatiana), reciprocal of 'squeeze'.

The similarity of out-talk to Standard Swahili for some forms leads some of the Western educated youth to criticise some in-talk or vernacular forms. For example, some adolescents characterized vernacular ndoo 'come' as "ungrammatical" since njoo is standard as well as out-talk. As rationalization, they made reference to the spelling n-d-o-o, which in standard Swahili would refer only to the lexical item 'bucket'. Actually, the spelling system of standard Swahili is inadequate for the MS vernacular, since it does not distinguish post-alveolar, e.g. ndoo 'bucket', from

dental, e.g. ndoo come', apicals. Since the speakers made the distinction in their own speech, it is clear they were accepting and passing on a rationalization about their vernacular from an external set of norms.

The point of the above discussion is that it is neither necessary or adviseable to conceive of the vernacular, or mother tongue, as what speakers say it is. In some, probably all societies, attitudes and idealizations of languages are not only subject to varation and change, as Kachru says, but also do not correspond to the way language is actually used or organized into systems. In Mombasa, the split in attitudes toward features of the vernacular is undoubtedly symptomatic of conflict and change within the society as Western, national and local values interact.

Turning now to the notion of code, K asks with respect to the possibility that code-mixing is a separate code, an apparent paradox, "the vital question is: when do we know that we have a new code?" to which I would add "when do we know that we have a code?" His following discussion suggests the criteria of autonomy, stability and functional range. Autonomy consists of both structural and functional distinctiveness. This would be quite clear for cases of diglossia, less clear otherwise. Stability, defined as "the degree of internal variation", as suggested by K, might be taken to imply that variability is equivalent to instability. This is not necessarily true of monolingual variables. Why should it be more true of bilingual

variables? The criterion of functional range, which K defines as "restriction of semantic range" seems to mean both range of situations in which a particular code, or candidate for analysis as a code, is used, and such things as the "inability to express abstract ideas", which K attributes to pidgins. However, given the situations in which some codes are used, such matters as "abstract ideas" may belong to registers socially inappropriate for some codes.

The concept of code is clearest when codes are stereotyped language varieties, maximally differentiated structurally and in situations of use, and having the semantic resources to meet all situations. This situation is most closely approximated by standard literary languages which are distantly , if at all, related. Spoken language probably never fills K's conditions, and are less distinct from each other on one or several of the proposed measures. Since K refers to "degree" of differentiation, it is possible to view codes as more or less distinct, rather than simply as the same or different. This implies that codes are variable, and are therefore ambiguous for whether we have one code with internal variation or two distinct codes, in many cases, particularly for bilingual communities.

K points out that in bilingual communities, standard languages may resemble each other in ways that vernacular varieties may not. Thus, he notes that in newspaper Hindi, certain constructions are found that are not found in popular

speech, but which are convergent with standard English constructions, e.g. passivization with object expressed and use of indirect discourse. It is interesting to note that this type of convergence also occurs in newspaper Swahili with respect to indirect discourse, as in: he said that he will go, as opposed to: he said "I'll go." Indirect discourse is virtually never used in vernacular Swahili. However, such constructions are very common in newspaper Swahili (perhaps as a direct borrowing from the English literary model) In addition, standard Swahili has been engineered to adopt the English-based distinction between progressive and unmarked present, i.e. the difference between "I am eating fish" and "I eat fish", to the variation between A and NA in vernacular speech, although this is not found in any vernacular form of Swahili. As a result, English speakers find it easier to make the standard Swahili distinction than monolingual Swahili speakers.

Discussing code-switching and mixing, K uses switching more narrowly than those who have studied these bilingual phenomena in other communities, e.g. Spanish-English bilingualism in the U.S. According to K's usage, switching seems to apply only between sentences. In mixing he includes Nash:1977 "midstream code-switching", also commonly called "intrasentential code-switching". In discussing code-mixing, he states "the user may be a bilingual and the receiver a monolingual." This would lead to dysfunction unless the monolingual could understand the

other language, or was meant to be impressed in some way by the use of the other language (a la Searle), or the mixing was indeed historical and borrowed into the base language so that even a monolingual could code-mix.

Poplack's study of intrasentential code-switching comes to mind as another type of switching or mixing not distinguished by K. This type is the fluent, midstream type sensitivity to ethnic identity of the interlocutors. It would not be used by a bilingual to a monolingual, as far as we know, and it seems to imply that its users are also fluent in non-mixed varieties of both languages as well according to Poplack.

The constraints proposed by Poplack allow for all the Indian examples given by K, but also for a good deal more. Poplack's equivalency constraint in codeswitching allows switching between structurally identical consitutents across languages. Thus, a switch may occur before any NP, any Prep + NP (prepositional phrase) or any clause. But switches are not expected within constituents whose internal structures differ across languages. Thus, within a NP, a switch from Spanish to English is not expected between N and following attributive adjective, since the same structure is not productive in English.

K proposes narrower constraints for what he calls 'educated' code-mixing between Hindi/Urdu and English. He excludes cases which would be allowed by Poplack's rule, e.g. the rankshift constraint prohibiting a switch before a relative clause, as in

"mera skuːl which is in Boston..." In other studies such code mixing or shifting is found, e.g. Gumperz:1971 records "...those friends are friends from Mexico que tienen chamaquitos." Why such a constraint should exist in Hindi-English 'educated' bilingualism but not in vernacular Spanish-English bilingualism in the U.S. is puzzling.

I would like to add to K's call for a typology of constraints found across codes, an appeal for a typology of constraints which distinguish code-switching or mixing in different multilingual communities.

Finally, about the motivation for switching and mixing, I would add to K's discussion of functional distinctions between codes, that the switch itself may be the signal rather than the social meaning (or lack of it) of the particular items switched to. This is implicit in Poplack & Sankoff's 1980 paper, where they propose a grammar of intrasentential codeswitching for the Puerto Rican community of 105th Street, Manhattan. The idea expressed there is that when the same syntactic structure exists in the Spanish and English grammars of the speakers, lexical filling from Spanish and English is controlled only by social situation. In some situations lexical filling may only be from Spanish or English, to the exclusion of the other. But in other situations, selection of lexicon is variable. Thus, there is no base language across which shifts occur, but simply variable selection from the lexicons of Spanish and English. This concept

is distinct from K's concept of code-mixture, since he defines code-mixing as always having clear base language.

In sum, Professor Kachru's paper is of great interest and importance. As well as adding substantively to our knowledge of variation in types of bilingualism throughout the world, and calling for comparative work on these types, it also indicates the need for more exchange of ideas among scholars approaching the study of bilingualism from different points of interest and methodologies-- and perhaps also indicates a need to establish a more consistent cross-disciplinary conceptual framework for bilingualism, with a more uniform terminology.

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